



Superior Court of California County of Riverside

4050 Main Street, Riverside, CA 92501

MEDIA ADVISORY

July 28, 2014

Contact: Mark A. Cope, Presiding Judge
(951) 777-3162

(Electronic version available at:

<http://riverside.courts.ca.gov/newsmedia/newsmedia.shtml>)

MAJOR GENERAL LAWRENCE NICHOLSON, 1ST MARINE DIVISION COMMANDER; ASSEMBLY MEMBER JOSE MEDINA, 61ST DISTRICT; AND SUPERVISOR JOHN BENOIT TO HONOR RIVERSIDE VETERANS COURT GRADUATES.

Riverside County Superior Court is pleased to announce that the Riverside Veterans Court, presided over by Judge Mark Johnson, will celebrate its third graduating class on Friday, August 1, 2014 at 3:30 p.m. in Department 1. The Court is honored to announce that Senior Marine Corps Commander Lawrence D. Nicholson, Commander of the First Marine Division at Camp Pendleton, will be on hand to speak to the Veteran Graduates. The First Marine Division is one of the premier military commands in the United States and a leader in the War on Terror. Joining Major General Nicholson at the ceremony will be Assembly Member Jose Medina of California's 61st Assembly District and Supervisor John J. Benoit of Riverside County.

The Superior Court of California, County of Riverside Veterans Court is a collaborative effort between the court and agencies such as the Riverside County District Attorney, Public Defender, Probation Department, Department of Mental Health and the Veterans Administration (VA). Veterans Court, which began in January 2012, is a treatment-based alternative to incarceration – authorized by California Penal Code § 1170.9 - for veterans in the community charged with committing a crime linked to issues such as traumatic brain injury (TBI), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), substance abuse, or mental health issues resulting from his or her service in the U.S. armed forces.

Each of the graduating veterans have successfully completed a minimum 18-month intensive treatment program, or a 12-month program for veterans convicted of specified misdemeanors that includes regular drug and alcohol testing, weekly individual and group counseling, mental health services, self-help meetings, alongside support from veterans and Veterans Court partners in the community including Judge Johnson, himself a decorated combat veteran. Ongoing aftercare services will be available to all graduates to ensure their continued success.

Major General Nicholson assumed command of the 1st Marine Division at Camp Pendleton, CA in June 2013. Prior to his current post, the major general's 35-year career in the armed forces included multiple distinguished combat tours and leadership

in a variety of roles, including Senior Military Assistant to the Deputy Secretary of Defense from 2010 to 2012.

Assemblyman Medina represents California's 61st Assembly District, which consists of Riverside, Moreno Valley, Perris and Mead Valley; Assemblyman Medina is an advocate of veterans issues. Supervisor Benoit represents the 4th district which stretches from Palm Springs south to the Salton Sea and east to the California-Arizona border.

Members of the press and public are invited to attend the graduation ceremony scheduled for Friday, August 1, 2014 in the Historic Courthouse,, 4050 Main Street, Riverside, CA 92501.

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